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MAE News: Newsletter from the Office of Monitoring, Audit and Enforcement, Spring 2005

Maine Workers' Compensation Board

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Recommended Citation
Maine Workers' Compensation Board, "MAE News: Newsletter from the Office of Monitoring, Audit and Enforcement, Spring 2005" (2005). *Workers' Compensation Board Documents.* Paper 18.
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MAE News

Newsletter from the Office of Monitoring, Audit and Enforcement
Maine Workers' Compensation Board

Spring 2005 **Volume 1, Number 1**

Office of Monitoring, Audit and Enforcement

Maine Workers' Compensation Board

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New to Maine Comp…Need a Refresher??

The Maine Workers' Compensation Board has conducted numerous training workshops during 2004 and during the first quarter of 2005. Workshops were held at insurance company locations in Syracuse, New York; Bedford, New Hampshire; Hartford, Connecticut; Freeport, Maine; Portland, Maine; Arkansas; and at our own Portland Regional Office.

Another open session in the Board's Portland Regional Office is scheduled for Thursday, October 13, 2005. If you are interested in attending, please contact Anne Poulin at (207) 287-7067 or Anne.Poulin@Maine.Gov to register.

This is an excellent, low cost, opportunity to train new staff on Maine Form Filing and Compliance Issues!

If you can't come to Maine and/or sending your claims staff to Maine hinders operations, customized training is available at insurer expense at your location. Contact the Monitoring Division for more details.

Important News from the EDI Mandate front… NOC Filing Deadline Pushed Ahead

The WC Board Rule under Chapter 3 Form Filing, subsection 4 Electronic Filing sets the follow dates for filing certain forms:

1. All First Reports of Injury (WCB-1) involving a day or more of lost time shall be filed with the Board by EDI not later than January 1, 2005.
2. All Notices of Controversy (WCB-9) shall be filed with the Board by EDI not later than July 1, 2005.
3. All Memoranda of Payment (WCB-3) shall be filed with the Board by EDI not later than January 1, 2006.

At the WC Board of Directors meeting on April 19, 2005, Paul Fortier recommended that the Board award a blanket waiver to extend the mandate for filing the Notice of Controversy (WCB-9) form electronically from July 1, 2005 to January 1, 2006. The Board accepted the recommendation and unanimously approved the new filing date for the NOC of January 1, 2006. Information regarding the filing specifications and layout can be found on the Board's website http://www.maine.gov/wcb/departments/technology/electronic.htm as they are developed.

In other EDI-related news, all carriers who chose to file their EDI First Reports (FROIs) using the state's proprietary method are "on-line" and fully operational according to Paul Fortier, the Board's Technology Officer. Paul estimates that nearly 75% of all FROIs entering the WCB's database are coming in via this method. Paul is working out any minor bugs that have developed since January 1st and wants to remind all carriers that the July 1st Deadline for all carriers who will be using the IAIABC Release III standard for their filings is fast approaching. If you're interested in the status of your company, drop Paul an e-Mail at Paul.Fortier@Maine.Gov.

The Board's Website: More Information About Workers' Compensation in Maine than You Ever Thought You Needed!

The Monitoring division would like to encourage all carriers and their staff to utilize the Board's website as an additional source of information and training materials. All Board forms are available on the website as are compliance reports, audit reports, contact information and a wealth of other Workers' Compensation related information.

As printing costs continue to rise, the Board has put copies of forms, reports, and tables, Rules & Regulations, etc. on the website to make them available to anyone who might have need of this information. While the forms cannot be sent electronically to the Board via the website, they can be downloaded, completed and submitted as faxes or e-mail attachments, etc.

Our address is www.Maine.Gov/wcb/

We are striving to make the site more user-friendly and interactive. If there are any suggestions of to how to make the website better, please contact the Monitoring Unit with any ideas.

What are Alternate Benefits?

For those of you who scrutinize every line and square inch of the riveting Reconciliation Reports that we mail each quarter, you may notice that there is a new line on the cover sheets of your reports. In the first section that is titled "Initial Indemnity Check" below the 29+ line there is a new line that reads "Alt. Benefits", or alternate benefits. Why, you may ask, is that there?

In the past certain payments never made their way into the report. Examples are salary continuation MOPs for those employers who choose to pay injured employers their standard salary after an injury rather than have their carrier issue "Comp" benefits. The assumption in this office has been that there is no break in wages with salary continuation, so what is there to measure in the way of timely payments. This still holds true, but now that we are showing a comparison between initial payments and initial NOCs (January, 2004), it is only fair that we represents all initial MOPs regardless of whether they were salary continuation or not.

However, since there is nothing to measure as to the timeliness of the payment, these are shown merely as alternate benefits (below the number of days) and are not considered as part of the universe of MOPs that determine the percentage of timely payments. Since carriers are still required to file these type of MOPs to the Board under the same standard as other MOPs, these will be tallied in the second column for timeliness. This may cause some problems for those of you who have not been worrying about the timeliness of these forms. They are now showing and are part of your compliance percentages.

Auditing Division Status Report

Kimberlee Barriere, the Auditing Manager of the Board's Audit Division tells us that, to date, they have completed a total of 73 Audits since the Program's inception. Ms. Barriere indicates that 16 Audits are ongoing and pending resolution and a final 6 are to be scheduled in the near future. If you're one of the few carriers that is yet to be audited by our intrepid crew, it may be time to reach out to our auditing staff to see what you need to do to prepare for their visit. Kimberlee can be reached at Kimberlee.Barriere@Maine.Gov.